

About DPR

DPR's mission is to protect human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use, and by fostering reduced-risk pest management.

Pesticides play a unique role in environmental protection. Contradicting the usual preventive approach, pesticides are toxic by design and deliberately released into nature. This paradox is explained by the fact that, when used properly, both natural and synthetic pesticides protect people and their environment from pests – animal, plant or microbial – that threaten human health and the balance of nature. Indeed, nature created the first chemical pesticides, produced by some plants and animals to repel their natural enemies.

Over time, people observed, adapted, and improved on natural pest management. Like most human endeavors, the beneficial use of pesticides depends on information and sound judgment. Scientific knowledge of pesticides continually evolves and improves. California's approach is based on a strong scientific foundation and has built the most comprehensive pesticide regulation program in the nation. Our task is to ensure that pesticides are used safely. Our standards are uncompromising, as is our commitment to protect people and the environment.

California has regulated pesticides for more than a century. Its citizens – through their gubernatorial administrations and Legislature – have established a comprehensive body of law to control every aspect of pesticide

sales and use, and to assure the state's pesticide regulators also have the tools to assess the impacts of that use.

The first pesticide-related law was passed in this state in 1901, and since the 1960s, a whole body of modern, increasingly science-based pesticide law and regulation has come into being. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is not only the premier state agency for pesticide regulation in the U.S., but has built a reputation of world-class science and regulatory decisionmaking that makes it the acknowledged peer of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada.

DPR's mission is to protect human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use and by fostering reduced-risk pest management. In the 2006-07 fiscal year, DPR's budget was \$66 million, funded by regulatory fees. DPR has about 350 employees, including more than 120 toxicologists, environmental and technical specialists, and other highly trained scientists.

About \$18 million of our budget is designated to support local pesticide enforcement by the County Agricultural Commissioners. Under DPR oversight, the Commissioners and the approximately 400 biologists that work for them serve as the local

enforcement agents for pesticide laws and regulations in the state's 58 counties.

Among other duties, County Agricultural Commissioners are responsible for issuing the site- and time-specific permits required of those who wish to use restricted pesticides in agriculture. (Restricted materials are those pesticides that have a higher potential to have an adverse impact on health or the environment.) No other state has a permitting system for use of highly hazardous pesticides, and few states have effective mechanisms for local enforcement of pesticide laws.

DPR monitors the use of pesticides – from the farm field to the grocery shelf – to assure the safety of workers and consumers. Our program includes:

- Evaluation and registration of pesticide products before they can be sold or used in California.

- Statewide licensing of commercial applicators, dealers, consultants, and other pesticide professionals.
- Evaluation of health impacts of pesticides through illness surveillance and risk assessment.
- Environmental monitoring of air, water, and soil.
- Residue testing of fresh produce.

As a final step, DPR continually reevaluates the health and environmental impacts of the pesticides it regulates, stressing risk reduction and, whenever possible, encouraging less use of pesticides in favor of more natural pest controls. We support development and adoption of pest management practices designed to prevent buildup of pest populations and reduce or eliminate harmful environmental and health impacts of pesticides.

What is a pesticide?

“Pesticide” is an umbrella term that includes many kinds of chemicals, natural and synthetic. A pesticide is any substance intended to control, destroy, repel, or attract a pest. Any living organism that causes damage, economic loss, transmits or produces disease may be the target pest.

Some common pesticides include:

Insecticides
Herbicides
Rodenticides
Molluscicides
Repellents
Disinfectants and sanitizers
Fungicides

